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Wen-hao Chou

August, 2015

AN EXAMINATION OF TEAM SYMBOLIC FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE SPORT  
CONSUMPTION

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A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department  
of Health and Human Performance

University of Houston

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

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By

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AN EXAMINATION OF TEAM SYMBOLIC FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE SPORT  
CONSUMPTION

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** The purpose of this research is to present a theoretical framework and scale of an expanded definition of perceived aesthetics previously identified with team symbolism components (i.e., logo, color, mascot, uniform, sport venue, etc.), and how they influence consumptive behavioral intentions of sport consumers. **Methods:** A structural model was developed based on the literature review and subsequently tested empirically by using an online 27-item questionnaire. A Likert type scale comprised of seven points was employed. The sample was drawn from a large, urban university, in a southern city, with both collegiate and professional sport teams. A total of 922 completed and usable respondent questionnaires were analyzed. **Results:** Results of two confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) respecified a model for perceived team symbolism and a consequent structural equation modeling (SEM) suggested the sport consumers' behavioral intentions is affected by perceived aesthetic quality of team symbolism.

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## LIST OF DEFINITIONS

COLOR. The color scheme of a sport team that is used in every visual image related to the team.

FUTURE SPORT CONSUMPTION BEHAVIORAL INTENTIONS (FSCBI). Indications of a sport consumer's wiliness to attend games, purchase merchandise, and consume media.

LOGO. Symbolic images or marks that the franchise wants to be perceived by their fans and consumers (Holt, 1998).

MASCOT. A person, animal, or object adopted by a sport team as a symbol to represent itself and to bring good luck.

PERCEIVED AESTHETIC QUALITY (PAQ). An evaluation result of aesthetic appearance (Cerosaletti & Loui, 2009).

SPORT TEAM APPEARANCE. The perceived comprehensive visual impression that represents a sport team

SPORT VENUE. A building, structure, or place where a sport competition is held.

TEAM SYMBOLISM (TS). The use of tangible and controllable symbols to represent a sport team.

UNIFORM. A type of clothing worn by players of a sport team.

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

Consumer behavior study focuses on why and how consumers choose to spend their money on products and services (Solomon, Polegato, & Zaichkowsky, 2009). A great deal of research has investigated why people buy athletic team merchandise (ATM) and watch or attend sporting events, mostly focusing on motivation and market demand variables (James & Ross, 2002, 2004; Kahle, Kambara, & Rose, 1996; Kolbe & James, 2000; Milne & McDonald, 1999; Trail & James, 2001; Wann, 1995). Despite the multitude of studies examining these sport consumer behaviors, one of the most underestimated factors is aesthetics of a sport team.

Aesthetics was validated as a motivating factor in several well-recognized sport consumer motivation scales, such as the Sport Fan Motivation Scale (Wann, 1995) and the Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption (Trail & James, 2001), in which aesthetics was defined as the mastery exhibited by athletes and/or teams during competition. However, in other research, this term is used as a means to appreciate something tangible and beautiful (Bamossey & Semenik, 1981; Ishii, Mazalek, & Lee, 2001; Petersen, Iversen, Krogh, & Ludvigsen, 2004; Vecco, 2010). Some individuals consume art to meet their higher order needs—pleasure in perceiving beauty and emotion in grasping the meaning of symbols (Eckman & Wagner, 1995). Likewise, spectators and fans consume sport, a form of art, to satisfy their aesthetic needs (Gumbrecht, 2006).

The current research contends that the traditional definition of aesthetics motive in sports consumer literature is too parochial because it is limited only to the intangible

beauty of the game itself. The aesthetics motive should be extended to other more tangible team symbolic factors such as color, logo, mascot, uniform and sport venue, which are termed as “team symbolism” in this study. As spectators consume sports, they are not only observing the beautiful competitions on the field, but they are also appreciating other aesthetic components around them. When these sport consumers enter sport venues such as ballparks and arenas, where sport team logos, color schemes, jerseys, and mascots are ubiquitous, they are exposed to these tangible aesthetic elements. Even before they watch and attend sport team events, it is common that sport team managers and marketers use these appearance factors to reach potential customers in the world via media in order to pursue the consistent growth of their fan base in today’s global sport marketplace. How these potential customers are affected by these tangible aesthetic elements of a sport team before they become loyal customers (i.e., fans) remains unknown. Henderson and Cote (1998) found that design characteristics affect reactions to logos prior to any promotional activity being implemented; therefore, in the early stage of “fanship” development, the perceived aesthetic quality of team logos and other tangible elements might already affect these potential customers’ future behavior intentions. The components of team symbolism have been examined in the context of consumptive motivations, but they have never been used to describe and ideate the aesthetic appearance of a sport team.

The review of literature suggests that research on these components of aesthetics has not been thoroughly examined in sport management. However, in other contexts such as advertising, marketing, and psychology, these symbolic components have been identified and their correlation to consumption intention has been verified (Aslam, 2006;

Bloemer & De Ruyter, 1998; Henderson & Cote, 1998; Mizerski, 1995; Walsh, Winterich, & Mittal, 2010). For example, a reliable logo is a key element of brand equity and a successful brand usually has a logo with high aesthetic quality (Henderson & Cote, 1998), whereas a poorly designed logo (i.e., with low aesthetic quality) could evoke negative results related to an organization's image and cause a loss of potential customers (Bird, 1992). That is how the look of a logo can influence how a brand and organization appears in the minds of consumers. These principles should be applied to sport organizations as well. As such, the purpose of this research is twofold: (1) to present a theoretical framework, and (2) a scale of the previously identified components of team symbolism and team appearance in an effort to expand the definition of aesthetics in the field of sport marketing.

Understanding team symbolic factors and their aesthetic usefulness is intended to explore a sport team's appearance and its impact on consumption behavior. A person's appearance will affect how others evaluate him or her; likewise, the appearance of a product influences consumers' product choices (Creusen & Schoormans, 2005). By analogy, it might be reasonable to infer that the appearance of a sport team might affect its consumers' evaluations and purchase intentions. However, in the sports marketing field, similar questions such as how to define the appearance of a sport team, whether it impacts sport consumer behavior intention, and even more importantly, what kinds of sport consumers tend to be influenced by the appearance of a sport team, have not been asked by academic researchers. Since a sport team is deemed as a subject of consumption, it's ironic that appearance factors have been overlooked in sport marketing academia.

The reason why there is such a gap is not because the so-called appearance factors do not exist or these factors are not crucial in the context of sport teams, but because selecting a sport team involves a unique psychological process of decision making that is not comparable to the consumption of material products (Funk, Mahony, & Ridinger, 2002). Unlike products displayed on the shelves, such as sneakers or clothes that can be easily evaluated based on looks, people do not seem to intuitively determine their favorite sport teams based solely on their appearance. However, the previous studies have indicated that the appearance of sport teams does affect consumer behavior intention. For example, the actual physical appearance of players has been considered a motive for some sports (Duncan & Brummett, 1989; Hofacre, 1994); the design of a team logo also influences the purchase intention of team-logoed merchandise (Ahn, Suh, Lee, & Pedersen, 2012). In many practical cases of sport marketing, sport teams that hastily changed their appearances were likely to elicit resentment from their fans. Holmes (2012) notes that the NBA Detroit Pistons is a prime example of this conflict: when the management altered the team logo and adopted a teal color scheme in 1996, this drastic change was met with widespread rejection and criticism by their fans. The outcry forced management to restore their original color scheme in 2005. Therefore, appearances are indeed one of the influential factors that impact team-related sport consumer behavior.

Besides the aforementioned players, logos and color schemes, the appearance of a sport team can also be composed of other visual components, such as uniforms, mascots, and sport venues. This study will identify the existence and a clear definition of sport team appearance by applying the concept of team symbolism. Secondly, the study will

validate whether a sport team's appearance impacts its current and potential consumers' future behavioral intentions. And lastly, determine why there is such an influence.

### ***Purpose of the Study***

The purposes of this research are as follows: (1) to develop a comprehensive conceptual framework and a valid and reliable scale that measures the perceived aesthetic quality of team symbolism associated with a collegiate football team, and (2) to examine the impact of perceived aesthetic quality of team symbolic factors on future sport consumption behavioral intentions. The perceived aesthetic quality of team symbolic factors, such as logo, color, mascot, uniform and sport venue, was defined and tested, and its influence on future consumptive behavioral intentions of current and potential sports consumers was explored. With the results, this study considered the concept of team symbolism, the appearance of a sport team, the extended aesthetic motivation, and the perceived aesthetic quality in the sport spectating context as a means for predicting future sport consumption behavioral intentions.

### ***Research Question***

1. By structural equation modeling (SEM), does the perceived aesthetic quality of these team symbolism factors have a statistically significant influence on sports consumer's future consumption behavioral intentions?
2. By adopting the variables of team symbolism (TS) and perceived aesthetic quality (PAQ), is it reasonable to expand the traditional definition of aesthetic in sports and supplement the comprehensiveness of sport consumption motivation?

### ***Significance of the Study***



The factors that were proposed in this study, including the Team Symbolism (TS), the appearance of a sport team, the extended aesthetic motivation, and the Perceived Aesthetic Quality (PAQ), can be proved really impactful on sport consumer future consumption behavior intention. The researcher was aware that these factors might cause minor variables in the research of sport marketing and consumer behavior compared with other existing major factors, such as team identification and point of attachment (POA). However, most of the current literature in sport marketing discusses behavior of fans instead of potential customers. In contrast, this study was intended to examine other possibilities in the existing discourse, further explore the complicated mind of the sport consumer before attachment to a specific sport team occurs, and understand the factors that might affect the future sport consumption behavioral intentions of these potential customers.

Within the spectator sport industry, the primary product sold to consumers is the sport event and athletic team merchandise (ATM). Research findings from this study filled a void in the sport management literature by first developing a comprehensive conceptual framework and multi-dimensional sport spectator-specific measurement scale for TS, and then built a link to behavioral intentions regarding future sport consumption behaviors. Gaining an in-depth understanding of how spectators perceived sport teams' aesthetic quality in relation to game attendance and merchandise purchase is beneficial to sport marketers. Recognizing the potential positive influence it may have on future attendance and purchase will enable them to better allocate their resources toward enhancing PAQ of the sport team. Examining PAQ of TS involved with a repetitive event, as opposed to a mega-event, extends the aesthetic research within the context of

sport spectatorship. Considering that consumer decision making requires the evaluation of aesthetic attributes of a product and that individuals have a tendency to weigh negative information more heavily than positive information when assessing those attributes (Creusen & Schoormans, 2005), a better understanding of low PAQ of TS and its effect on behavioral intentions would be beneficial to sport managers and marketers. Furthermore, knowledge regarding a low PAQ of TS as a constraint to attendance could be particularly useful for collegiate athletic teams that have low attendance, perhaps partially resulting from perceptions of ugliness (i.e., the lack of aesthetic quality). Therefore, this study focused on identifying and measuring the dimensions of sport team appearance and the PAQ of TS relevant to a sport spectator context. Examining the impact of future sport consumption behavioral intentions of the potential customer will provide a universal principle of sport marketing that can be applied to practical promotion and academic discussion.

### ***Delimitations***

The study was completed within the following delimitations:

1. Research participants were potential consumers of a collegiate football team.
2. Research participants were comprised of men and women over the age of 18.
3. The study was conducted via an online Internet questionnaire because of assumed technological preference of the participants.
4. Participants were recruited from undergraduate online classes from one large university in the south United States.
5. Data were collected in spring 2015.

### ***Limitations***

The study had the following limitations that might affect its internal and external validity:

1. This study was limited to a convenience sample with volunteer participants.
2. The generalizability of the study's findings might be limited to only one southern state in the U.S.
3. The sample size of the study was adequate for SEM, but factor structures and causal relationships derived were not cross-validated by an additional independent sample.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review**

As briefly explained in the introduction, this explorative study is aimed at identifying the definite dimensions of sport team appearance and understanding how sport team appearance might influence future sport consumption behavioral intentions of potential customers by measuring its perceived aesthetic quality of team symbolism. In order to serve this purpose, relevant literature from different disciplines will be reviewed to define the new terminology (i.e., sport team appearance, team symbolism, and perceived aesthetic quality), and then a structural model for testing will be proposed and elaborated.

#### **Sport team Appearance**

In the dictionary, “appearance” is defined as the way that something or someone looks (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2015). Specifically regarding the designed product, the product’s physical appearance components include color (hue, saturation, and combination), shape (round, rectangular), texture, surface, size, etc. (Blijlevens, Creusen & Schoormans, 2009). Color is the only one of these components that can be used to describe the way a sport team looks because fans tend to associate the team with its color scheme (Attrill, Gresty, Hill, & Barton, 2008). Consider the NBA’s Los Angeles Lakers: their fans refer to the team as “purple and gold.” Besides color scheme, these fans might describe the imagery of the Lakers using their former star players, like Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Earvin “Magic” Johnson, their coach Pat Riley who is known for his slicked-back hair and Armani suits, and the famed “Showtime” run-and-gun game style

(Pearlman, 2014). Accordingly, these definitions used for material products are only partially applicable to the appearance of a sport team, and further amendments are required.

When people think of a sport team, these visual images should be deemed as part of the team's appearance. According to the pilot interview results of this study, the researcher found the frequent responses from these interviewees to the question, "What image do you recall when you think about the Houston Rockets?" included color (e.g., red and yellow), logos (e.g., typefaces and nickname), uniforms (e.g., regular, alternative, and retro), players (e.g., James Harden, Jeremy Lin, and Hakeem Olajuwon etc.), coaches (e.g., Kevin McHale and Rudy Tomjanovich etc.), owner (i.e., Leslie Alexander), mascot (i.e., Clutch the bear), cheerleaders (i.e., the Rocket Power Dancers), sport venues (e.g., the Toyota Center or the former Compaq Center), winning history (e.g., two-time NBA championships and the Larry O'Brien Championship Trophy), and game style (e.g., three pointers without midrange jumpers, or big man play).

Participants' responses are diverse due to the lack of a conclusive agreement on the definition of sport team appearance among sport consumers, practitioners and scholars. By categorizing the aforementioned responses, the pilot study suggested that team appearance should contain three main categories: people (e.g., players, coaches, and owners), games (e.g., history and game style), and symbolism (e.g., logos, colors, mascots, cheerleaders, uniforms, sports venues), shown in Figure 2-1.

In this study, the researcher attempted to further classify these three categories of sport team's appearance by two variables (controllable/tangible) in Table 1 below. A "Controllable" appearance factor means the team management can change or determine

this factor. People are an uncontrollable factor because it is obvious that sport managers cannot change or determine the actual physical appearance of their players, coaches or owners. Some teams may require their players to maintain a specific image, but not many professional teams do so (Machir, 2013). The MLB's New York Yankees have a strict facial hair policy that required some of baseball's bearded figures, Johnny Damon and Kevin Youkilis, to shave clean before joining the club; however, not every player can be tamed, like Brian Wilson who was ruled out signing by the Yankees GM Brian Cashman because the pitcher refused to shave his beard. In most of cases, the only thing that the management of sport teams can do is to replace a particular player or coach.

In addition, the management can neither control the way the team plays, nor control their winning records and history. However, it is certain that the sport team's management can completely control symbolism by changing the team's logos, designing a new jersey, building another stadium, and adopting different mascot and color scheme on their demand.

The "tangible" appearance factor refers to something capable of being precisely identified or realized by the mind (Merriam-Webster, 2015), such as people and symbolism, is real not imaginary. They are definite, not vague or elusive. Like players, uniforms, sports venues, and mascots, they can be touched and easily seen or recognized. On the contrary, games are intangible. Although spectators can see the process of sports games or the mastery of athletic performance, the game style cannot be represented precisely by visual images and graphics. Games are experiences and memories, and the intangible beauty of a game is not similar to team logos and uniforms that can be refined

into a definite symbol, serving a tangible and unambiguous characterization of a sport team (see Table 2-1).

Based on the previous discussion, the definition of a team's appearance is the perceived comprehensive visual impression that represents a sport team. Operationally, team appearance can be tangible and intangible, and cannot be fully controlled by the management.

This study proposed these two variables (i.e., controllability and tangibility) in order to emphasize the importance of sport team appearance from the perspective of sport management. Discussing the impact of sport team appearance on sport consumers makes practical sense when the team appearance can be controlled and used precisely and repeatedly by sport managers and marketers.

### **Team Symbolism (TS)**

In this study, team symbolism is defined as the use of tangible and controllable symbols to represent a sport team. Following the definition, there are five tangible and controllable components of a sport team's appearance that can be classified as team symbolism. They are logo, color, uniform, mascot, and sport venue (e.g., stadium, ballpark, or arena). Sport managers and marketers can determine how the team symbolism looks and redesign them from time to time in order to increase market share, attractiveness, and relevancy. This may come at a major expense based on workforce, opportunity costs, and finances (Ahn, Suh, Lee, & Pedersen, 2012). These expensive investments have been proven to be effective in previous research (Kelly, Hoffman, & Carter, 1999; Walsh, Winterich, & Mittal, 2010, 2011). But none of the researchers are adopting the theoretical approach of aesthetics to explain their effectiveness.

Furthermore, the inclusion of these five team symbolism components derived from the academic discussion of “team” as one point of attachment (POA). Previous research results suggested that there are a total of seven different POA: player, team, coach, university, community, sport, and level (Trail, Robinson, Dick, & Gillentine, 2003). The team factor has been isolated from other closely related components; therefore, this study of team appearance is of justification by developing a new construct, team symbolism, to further fabricate the context of a sport team without including player, community, coach, etc.

It must be emphasized that this study is not trying to prove that these components of team symbolism are effective in sport marketing, which has been supported by numerous studies. Instead, it is trying to explain why they are valid and how they influence sports consumers’ future behavioral intentions through a different theoretical approach of aesthetics depicting a perceived psychological process in their mind.

To serve this purpose, diverse literature from disciplines other than sport management (e.g., advertising, marketing, psychology, and philosophy) will be reviewed and applied to explain the viability of these five team symbolism components. For example, a sport team’s mascot is similar to a spokes-character to a product (e.g., Chester Cheetah to Cheetos); a ballpark to a baseball team is comparable to a shop to a brand (e.g., Apple concept store to Apple). Using similar and relevant research results in other fields is beneficial in corroborating the existence and definition of team symbolism. The results also provide the basis for questionnaire and scale design, inspire ideas pertaining to theoretical framework, and hopefully, fill the void in contemporary sport marketing literature.



## Logo

A logo can be defined as a graphic indication or feature to promote customers' recognition of the target brand and might be regarded as a significant asset for most organizations and companies (Walsh, Winterich, & Mittal, 2010). Regarding sport teams, logos are symbolic images or marks by which the franchises want to be perceived by their fans and consumers (Holt, 1998). Previous studies have found that a logo is one of the most imperative brand elements (Bird, 1992; Henderson & Cote, 1998; Henderson, Cote, Leong, and Bernd, 2003), and the high quality of logo design is directly related to positive evaluation and satisfaction from consumers (Kohlia & Suri, 2002).

Practically, sport team logos typically consists of typeface, graphics, and color way. Consider the NBA teams' logos as examples: the color way is simply the same as the team color scheme (e.g., blue and orange of the New York Knicks); the typeface could be all or part of the team's nickname (e.g., "R" of the Houston Rockets); the graphics vary and might include a team mascot (e.g., Benny the Bull of the Chicago Bulls), a visualized team symbol (e.g., stars of the Orlando Magic), famous icons (e.g., Golden Gate Bridge of the Golden State Warriors), or another common symbol (e.g., basketball).

Logos are a critical component of brand aesthetics. Previously, many sport teams have tried to establish a better brand value by changing their logos. In 2010, three NBA teams unveiled new logo designs. These teams claimed that the "new look" will turn the page on the next chapter of the team's sport history (Kerby, 2010). However, not all changes had positive results. Customers' responses toward the logo depend on what the logo looks like and how good it represents the team in the right way, like "speedy,"

“powerful,” “too plain,” or “boring and unoriginal” (Wyshynski, 2011). That is, sport customers generally determine how receptive a logo is perceived, and whether it is aesthetically pleasing can directly influence the sport team appearance. Therefore, a logo is arguably the most important component of team symbolism.

## **Color**

Color is defined in this study as the color scheme of a sport team that is used in every visual image related to the team. A sport team’s colors show on more than its uniforms; the colors are also used in stadium decorations, merchandise, logo, mascots, websites, and other visual elements. Color itself has become a symbolic element with a similar aesthetic effect because of psychological responses to colors, such as the perception that red is associated with dominance (Rowe, Harris, & Roberts, 2005). Color can influence sport consumers’ cognition and attitude, which has been studied extensively by behavioral and social scientists, specifically in the field of psychology (Sorokowski & Szmajke, 2011). The majority of color research has focused on its influence on athlete performance and spectator behavior. Examples include color performance on team physicality (Feltman & Elliot, 2011; Frank & Gilovich, 1988), competition results (Ilie, Ioan, Zagrean, & Moldovan, 2008), team success and popularity (Attrill, Gresty, Hill, & Barton, 2008).

Colors, like athletic nicknames and mascots, are important cultural symbols to every institution’s booster culture, and they represent shared values and assumptions (e.g., belief in the goodness of the team and university), foster group affiliation (e.g., fans wear clothing with team colors to indicate team loyalty), and constitute a common sport team identity (Connolly, 2000). Color identification has long been utilized in sports to

differentiate opposing athletics teams. Fans also tend to associate the team with its color scheme; moreover, fans purchase sport-related paraphernalia like T-shirts, jerseys, scarves, and hats in teams' color schemes to express their support (Derbaix & Decrop, 2011). Therefore, the color scheme of the team is an important marketing tool that is used as identification and segmentation from other teams.

Two features of color need to be addressed when color is classified as one component of team symbolism. First, color is not exclusive. Many sport teams share the same color scheme, even in the professional sports; the NBA's Philadelphia Seventy-Sixers and Detroit Pistons both use red and blue. Therefore, sport teams have to compete with others in customers' minds to be the first team associated with their color scheme. The appearance of other sport teams with the same color scheme might also interfere with how potential customers perceive the team's image.

Secondly, people are born with color preferences (Schloss, Strauss, & Palmer, 2012) and their existing color preferences might influence their evaluation of the team adopting a color scheme that is different from their particular color preference (Chou, Cottingham, & Trammell, 2013). Given that a spectator of one sport team can be also a fan of another team, it is entirely plausible that spectators' perceptions of a team can be affected by their existing color preferences (i.e., they prefer one given team because its color scheme happens to be their favorite color). When spectators select a sport team on the market, their existing color preferences should affect their intention of watching and attending games, purchasing merchandise, and becoming fans of a given team.

## **Uniform**

Uniform is a special kind of clothing that is worn by all the players of a sport team (Merriam-Webster, 2015). The uniform of a sport team is designed for a distinctive fashion, differentiating a team from others by using its unique logo and colors on jerseys, shorts, jackets and helmets. Therefore, the uniform is treated as a “trade dress”, a form of intellectual property, which is a legal term of art that generally refers to characteristics of the visual appearance of a product or its packaging, design of a store or building that signify the source of the product to consumers (Dinwoodie, 1996). For example, the gold and purple uniform of the Los Angeles Lakers is trade dress and legally protected by laws like trademarks.

In the context of sports, uniform is also a symbolic representative and intellectual property of a specific team. For example, the New York Yankees’ jersey is called ‘pinstripe’ by its fans, and this nickname became a symbolism of the Yankees. There is a New York Yankees community website entitled ‘Pinstripe Alley,’ using the features of the team jersey as a representative of this specific team. Some athletic uniforms are designed and modified for better performance, such as camouflage, aspiration, or protection etc., but most uniforms are designed to communicate the insider membership in the sports organization (Pratt & Rafaeli, 2001). The use of uniforms by sport teams is an effort in branding and developing a standard brand image. Uniform cannot only convey uniformity and homogeneity, but also conspicuousness (Rafaeli & Pratt, 1993).

Research in the field of psychology has indicated that uniform has a powerful impact on how people perceive each other. Johnson (2005) suggested that clothing color and style are significant factors for first-time contact. Durkin and his colleague also identified the salience of the uniform in young children’s initial perceptions of police

status, which were dominated the superficial aspects of appearance (Durkin & Jeffery, 2000). Previous research suggested that uniforms possess psychological function that influences people's attitude and behavior. Studies also revealed that physical appearance, including uniforms, is the factor most often used in developing a first impression of someone (Lennon & Davis, 1989). Likewise, the design details of uniforms, such as color and style, can affect the perceived image of players who wear them and the sport teams that adopt them.

Also noteworthy is that many governing bodies of sport teams have strict rules about uniforms, including jerseys and shorts; for example, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) requires the numbers on jerseys to be Arabic, a colored neckline must be one inch in width, undershirts must be a color similar to the jersey, and sleeves cannot extend past the elbow (Branch, 2015). Given these standardizations, the sport managers of teams cannot change the shape of uniform, only adjust the color scheme of the uniform or the logo on the jerseys. In other words, uniform seems to possess less prominence than other components of team symbolism.

Even so, the appearance of uniform still has significant impacts, and its importance is different from logo and color scheme because uniforms are major products of athletic team merchandise (ATM), and the sale of merchandise is the main source of income for professional sport teams. The poor design of jerseys can directly impact the profit of teams. For example, the NBA introduced the novel short-sleeved jerseys in 2014, and this type of uniform has received a significant amount of criticism: Stephen Curry thinks they are ugly, Dirk Nowitzki said they look awful, and Beno Udrih said the sleeves "bother his shot" and led to misses. Fans think teams who wear the short-sleeved

jerseys look ridiculous and like a volleyball team (Thomas, 2015). While some of the negative comments were related to functionality, most of the criticism focused on appearance and aesthetics. The Adidas-approved sleeve-jerseys are not selling well and consumers complained about them (Dwyer, 2014). This is a great practical example illustrating that the appearance of uniforms influences the sport consumer purchase behavioral intention and also impacts the perception of sport teams that wear them (Thomas, 2015). Therefore, the uniform is a unique component of team symbolism because it serves a combination of two other components (i.e., color and logo) that can be sold as merchandise independently. The design, beauty, and gracefulness of the uniform are extremely important and need to be addressed carefully.

### **Mascot**

Mascot is defined in the dictionary as a person, animal, or object adopted by a group as a symbol to represent a group (such as a sport team) and to bring good luck. The term 'mascot' originated from the French word *mascotte* and was first used in 1881 (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2015). Mascots are used throughout marketing to attract attention and are not exclusively used in sport; they represent a common public identity of many other groups, such as schools, brands, societies, and military units. Fiske and Taylor (1984) suggest that in advertising, an icon is noticeable or salient when it is differentiated from its immediate context.

Team mascots can be expressed in the form of a logo, live animal, inanimate object, or a costumed character. Most sport teams in the United States have official mascots, and the 10 most frequently used mascots for college athletic teams are eagles, tigers, cougars, bulldogs, warriors, lions, panthers, Indians, wildcats, and bears (Frank,

1982). Eight of these are animals with vicious or predatory tendencies. Most sports fans consider these to be characteristics and appearances that competitive athletic teams ought to possess (Nuessel, 1994). Mascots may also symbolize a local or regional trait, such as the Nebraska Cornhuskers' mascot, Herbie Husker.

In fact, a team's *nickname*, *mascot*, and *logo* are sometimes interchanged.

Nuessel (1994) defines these expressions of team designation, dividing them into three distinguishable categories. A *nickname* is the commonly used linguistic designation for a given sport team, *logo* refers to the graphic two-dimensional artistic image of a team's designation, and *mascot* refers to the three-dimensional manifestation of a team's nickname. In this study, a mascot is a person who dons a costume manifesting a team's nickname and characteristics. For example, the athletic teams of the University of Houston, which are nicknamed "Cougars" and use both a live and costumed cougar as their mascot named "Shasta." As such, the mascot referring in this study is the anthropomorphized costume of Shasta.

In the sport context, most of the studies on mascots focused on effective design principles (Lin, Lin, & Ko, 1999; Ping, 2010), commercial impact of Olympic Games mascots (Freeman, Knight, & O'Reilly, 2006; Griggs, Freeman, Knight, & O'Reilly, 2012; Sun & Li, 2006), and social controversy of Native Americans (Strong, 2004; Connolly, 2000; Springwood, 2004; Staurowsky, 2007). As sports have become increasingly commercial, some mascots have readily been adopted as icons of teams, enhancing the brand of the team with a memorable and anthropomorphized mascot (Griggs, Freeman, Knight, & O'Reilly, 2012; Magdalinski, 2004). The Olympic mascots are positive examples, representing the cultural heritage of the location where the

Olympics are taking place and helping market the Olympic Games to the young and global audience. On the other hand, in August 2005, the NCAA announced a policy that required universities with Native American mascots and imagery to refrain from displaying those during NCAA-sponsored events or from hosting championships games. As a negative and objectionable example, this controversy itself demonstrates the influence of mascot to potential customers.

The success of a mascot is determined by its appearance, such as its overall beauty, design details, and gracefulness, which influences its effectiveness and symbolism (Freeman, Knight, & O'Reilly, 2006). Some mascots with poor design received severe criticism, and these low aesthetic symbols damaged the image of the organizations they represented. The notorious example is Izzy, the unpopular official mascot of the Atlanta 1996 Summer Olympics, which was criticized because of its appearance and remembered as one negative image of Atlanta (Sun & Li, 2006).

Mascots appear not only at team matches and related events but also as a marketing tool in other branding occasions such as commercials and printed stationery. Mascots often define a brand, and are used as goodwill ambassadors in the community for their team, company, or organization. Like benefit of brand mascots in business, such as Google's Android Bot, mascots in sports can create long-term support for the teams. Recognizable mascots such as Chester Cheetah, Coca Cola Bear, and the NBC peacock, are typically known without even having to refer to the company or brand.

Like these famous spoke-characters, mascots are deemed as a representative of sport teams. Moreover, the appearance and design of team mascot is crucial to communicate a complex set of sport team values visually (Klara, 1997) and gain the



attention of those sports consumers who may not have been interested (Lin, Lin, & Ko, 1998). These factors explained above lead to the conclusion that mascot is another component of team symbolism.

### **Sport Venues**

A sport venue is defined as a building, structure, or place in which a sporting competition is held. Most of the empirical studies on sport venues in sport management are considering home advantage (Gayton, Matthews, & Nickless, 1987; Kerr & Vanschaik, 1995; McGuire, Courneya, Widmeyer, & Carron, 1992; Varca, 1980), psychological disadvantage (Baumeister & Steinhilber, 1984), game location selection (Terry, Walrond, & Carron, 1998), sponsorship effectiveness (Choi, Stotlar, & Park, 2006), facility management (Ammon, Southall, & Blair, 2004), economic impact (Campbell & Phago, 2008; Melaniphy, 1996), legacy (Pfleegor, Seifried, & Soebbing, 2013), and customer satisfaction (Greenwell, Fink, & Pastore, 2002).

Some literature mentioned that many famous and historical stadiums have become a symbolism of their tenants, such as the MLB Boston Red Sox's Fenway Park, and the Chicago Cubs' Wrigley Field (Bristow & Sebastian, 2001). Because the sport venues are deemed a representative icon of the sport team, they are also adopted as one elements of sport team logo, like the Houston Astros' Astrodome. Sometime when a franchise has a new stadium, a team logo will be redesigned, like the 2002 NFL's Seattle Seahawks. The relationship between sports venues and sport teams is very close. The physical sports venues can influence team customer satisfaction (Greenwell, Fink, & Pastore, 2002), and the design and appearance of stadiums can attract both fans and lower-identified spectators (Baade, Nikolova, & Matheson, 2006).

Referring to literature in the marketing field, a store is an establishment where merchandise is sold (Dodds, Monroe, & Grewal, 1991). In today's sensory branding, a store has become a channel for a brand to give satisfaction experience to its target consumers (Lindstrom, 2005). For example, the Apple Stores' management can generate enthusiasm among its retail customers, build extremely high customer loyalty, and the Apple Store serves as a symbol of Apple (Coget, 2011). When customers think of the Apple brand, the image of Apple Store will also come to their minds.

Likewise, the current study argues that sport venues, such as ballparks, stadia, and arenas, can serve as a symbol of a sport team. It is highly possible that how sport consumers perceive sport venues will influence how they perceive sport teams. The appearance and architecture features of a sport venue will affect the way the sport team looks. For example, the replica of the frieze in the new Yankee Stadium has been considered a trademark of the team. The Houston Cougars' \$120 million, 40,000-seat TDECU Stadium, which debuted in 2014, also included a view of Houston's famous downtown skyline as a symbol, connecting the team with the facility (Barron, 2014).

In addition to symbolism, aesthetics or beauty of the stadium was found to be a factor that is positively related to game attendance, among other variables including the newness, seat comfort, cleanliness and accessibility of the stadium (Wakefield & Sloan, 1995). That is, the more favorable the fans' attitude toward the stadium, the higher the attendance. Facility aesthetics refers to the exterior and interior appearance of the stadium. The exterior appearance includes stadium architecture and age of the stadium. While the external beauty adds to the stadium aesthetics, the interior plays an equally important role in fan satisfaction and attendance (Shank & Lyberger, 2014). The interior

of the stadium includes factors such as color of the stadium walls, facades, and seats, the presence of sponsors' signage, and the presence of symbols from the team's past.

Aesthetics was also taken as major criterion in ranking the top 25 college football stadiums along with atmosphere, tradition, and home game records of the team (Shank & Lyberger, 2014).

## **Conclusion**

In sum, these five components of team symbolism serve as a representative icon of a sport team. Their appearance influences the symbolic meaning and the perceived image of team that they represent in fans' and potential customers' minds. The influence of these five visual elements is mentioned and discussed over and over again in the literature from sport management and other diverse disciplines, which commonly emphasize the importance of their design (Henderson & Cote, 1998), beauty (Alshebil, 2007), and gracefulness. Other more specific aesthetics perspectives of the design, such as roundness and angularity might be significant factors related to attitudes and potential purchasing intentions (Ahn, Suh, Lee, & Pedersen, 2012); however, these specific characteristics and fine distinguish serve better to evaluate the detailed response of consumer in visual design research. Based on the explorative nature of this study, the aesthetic evaluation is focused on design, beauty and gracefulness of these team symbolism components.

## **Perceived Aesthetic Quality (PAQ)**

The definition of perceived aesthetic quality is "an evaluation result of aesthetic appearance of sport team." With the rising costs and prevalence of sport sponsorship and advertising, there is a need to determine the effectiveness of different forms of

promotions and understand how they impact consumer behavior. Consumers' awareness, attitudes, and purchase intentions are the main focus when assessing effectiveness. In this study, the effectiveness of team symbolism is evaluated and determined by how good the potential costumers perceive the aesthetic quality of sport team appearance.

### **Aesthetic Factors in Sport Consumption**

Aesthetics refers to the quality and design of an object's physical features (Veryzer, 1993). If a product looks modern, then it has a positive effect on product appraisal when consumers are motivated to assess a product on its aesthetics (Creusen & Schoormans, 2005). One of the definitions of aesthetic is "pleasing in appearance" (Merriam-Webster, 2015). The concept of appearance has been related to aesthetics for a long time, and attending to appearances or looks is a necessary condition of aesthetic experience (Cohen, 1959). In other words, appreciating the beauty of appearance is part of aesthetic experience.

In the context of sports, Gumbrecht (2006) argued that watching sports is a contemporary form of the aesthetic experience and sports fans are attracted to attend games not only to experience a vicarious thrill, anxiety release, competitive spirit, but also to witness the beauty of the game. Indeed, it is very common to hear sports fans enthusiastically call a home run, a touch down, or a basketball pass "beautiful," and it is also common to describe a sport team as ugly because of the way they play. For example, the host of an NBA TV show mentioned the former New York Knicks player, Charles Oakley, saying that he played on one of the "ugliest" teams in history (NBA, 2015).

Substantial literature exists regarding why spectators and fans attend sport events, mostly centered on motivation (Funk, Mahony, Nakazawa, & Hirakawa, 2001; Trail &

James, 2001; Wann, 1995; Wann, Melnick, Russell, & Pease, 2001; Zhang et al., 2001), and Wann (1995) found aesthetics to be significantly related to sport involvement. Aesthetics refer to the “excellence, beauty, and creativity in an athlete’s performance” (Smith, 1988, p. 58). In other words, spectators are motivated to watch sports because of the high level of performance seen on the field, pitch, or court. Several researchers also have found that male sports customers are more motivated by aesthetics (James & Ridinger, 2002; Wann, 1995; Wann, Schrader, & Wilson, 1999).

Wann (1995) and Milne and McDonald (1999) both developed scales to measure aesthetic motivation. Wann’s Sport Fan Motivation Scale (SFMS) proposed eight underlying factors that motivate fan behavior, while Milne and McDonald’s scale sought to measure both spectator and participant motives positing 13 factors. Both scales included aesthetics. Trail and James (2001) developed the Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption (MSSC) that also included aesthetics as one of nine factors.

### **Expanded Definition of Aesthetics in Sport Consumption**

Despite the growing amount of research into the significance of aesthetics, this research contends that the definition of aesthetics in previous literature is too parochial because it is limited only to the intangible and uncontrollable beauty of the game itself. Since aesthetics is a set of principles concerned with the nature and appreciation of beauty (Merriam-Webster, 2015), and the sport team appearance can be an aesthetic object, the aesthetics motive should be extended to other more tangible and controllable aesthetic visual elements. These team symbolism factors include logo, color, mascot, uniform and sport venue. The current research hypothesizes that the evaluation result of aesthetic appearance of sport teams can impact the potential customers’ future sport

consumption behavioral intentions. However, finding an existing measurement of aesthetic quality has proven to be challenging.

Additionally, any purchase necessarily involves some amount of aesthetics and the amount of aesthetics consumers perceive can affect their purchasing behavior (Veryzer, 1993). Thus, perceived aesthetics is an important concept likely to affect the behavior of sport consumers. To date, perceived aesthetics has received a great deal of attention in consumer behavior, advertising, and product design fields of study, but little scholarly attention has been given to the way it might affect sport consumers. Therefore, this research applied the extended definition of aesthetics and the newly proposed concept of “perceived aesthetic quality” (PAQ) as a variable.

### **Future Sport Consumption Behavioral Intentions**

Sport consumption can be divided into two different segments: spectator consumption and participant consumption (Shank & Lyberger, 2014). Rather than choosing to participate in sport activities, the decision-making processes involved in spectator consumption is engaging in non-active consumption of sport events. Shank and Lyberger further break down spectator consumption into two different types: active consumption and passive consumption. Active spectator consumption consists of game attendance (Zhang, Smith, Pease, & Jambor, 1997) and sport merchandise purchase (Kwon, Trail, & James, 2007), while passive spectator consumption includes consuming sports through various forms of media, such as television, newspaper, magazine, and Internet (Fink, Trail, & Anderson, 2002). In this research, sport consumption mainly refers of these three consumption behaviors: game attendance, merchandise consumption, and media consumption.

In order to understand the impact of team appearance on sport consumer, this study used behavioral intentions as dependent variables. According to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB; Ajzen, 1991), behavioral intentions are viewed as antecedents to actual behavior, and the actual behavior is preceded by the intention to engage in that behavior. In this study, the potential customers of a sport team might not actually consume anything related to the team; therefore, it is reasonable to measure their future consumption behavioral intentions instead of actual behavior. Sport consumption is theoretically identified as containing three characteristics. The future sport consumption behavioral intention will be treated as a multi-dimensional construct and measured by three intentions including attendance intention, merchandise consumption intention, and media consumption intention.

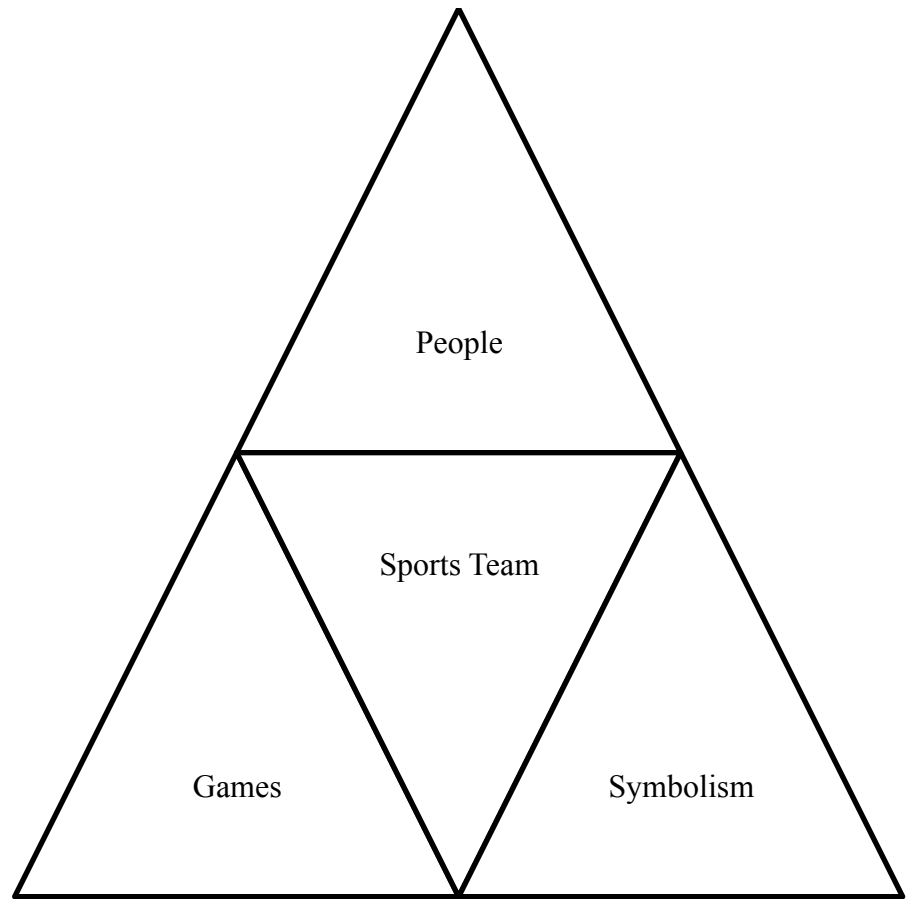
### **Proposed Model**

As previously mentioned, behavioral intentions are directly related to a person's future actions (Ajzen, 1991); therefore, it is important to identify the factors that influence behavioral intentions for practitioners in the sports industry. In consumer behavior, perceptions of aesthetic appearance are considered to be one significant factor influencing purchase decision making for products such as cars and clothes. The current study hypothesized that the tangible and controllable components of sport team appearance (i.e., team symbolism) are the case as well. As such, the model for test is proposed as following in Figure 2-2.

**Table 2-1.** Categorization of sport team appearance

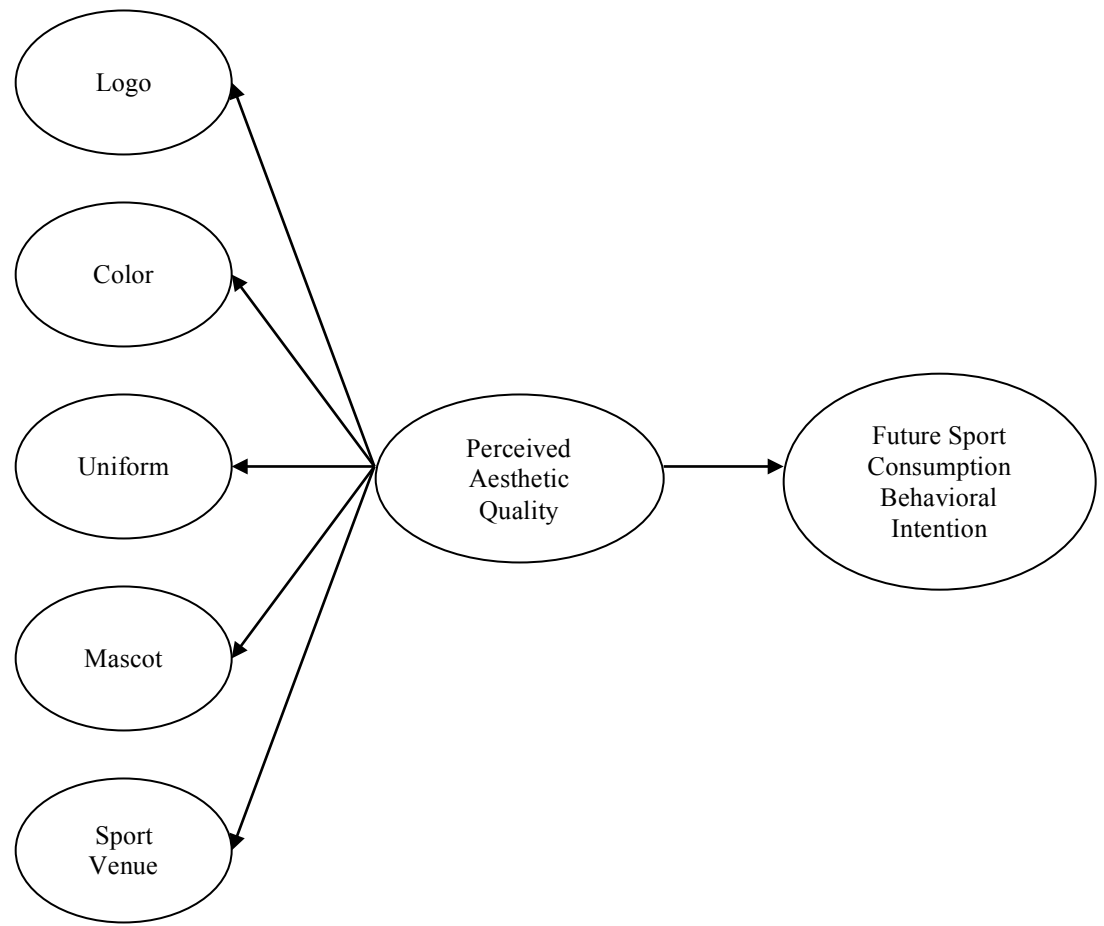
	Tangible	Intangible
Controllable	Symbolism	N/A
Uncontrollable	People	Games





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**Figure 2-1.** The pyramid of sport team appearance



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**Figure 2-2.** The proposed model

## **Chapter Three**

### **Methodology**

The purposes of this current research are to develop a conceptual framework measuring the perceived aesthetic quality of a collegiate football team's appearance, and to examine the impact of perceived aesthetic quality factors on future sport consumption behavioral intentions. Operationally, this study (1) uses "Team Symbolism" (TS) to describe and measure the tangible and controllable appearance of a sport team, and (2) uses "Perceived Aesthetic Quality" (PAQ) to evaluate and test the relationship between sport team appearance and future sport consumption behavioral intentions of game attendance, media consumption, and merchandise purchase. Due to its importance within the landscape of overall collegiate sports and its immense popularity within the U.S., collegiate football was selected as the focal area for the current study. Collegiate football is of particular importance to sport marketers, as it represents the primary revenue-producing sport for many collegiate athletic programs. Instead of using a fictional team, the real-world sport team served to elicit serious responses from participants because they have a higher identification and involvement. The methodology for the current study will be comprised of four sections: (1) questionnaire, (2) participants, (3) procedures, and (4) data analyses.

### **Questionnaire**

The questionnaire included scales for attitude toward team symbolism and future sport consumption behavior intentions, and participants' demographic information (See Appendix). In the first part, subjects were asked to rate how they like each of the five

team symbolism components including logo, color, mascot, uniform, and stadium of the Houston Cougars football team. There were four question items for each components, such as “I appreciate the design of the Houston Cougars’ logo,” “I appreciate the beauty inherent in the Houston Cougars’ logo,” “I enjoy the gracefulness associate with the Houston Cougars’ logo,” and “I enjoy seeing the Houston Cougars’ logo.” Because the pictorial components are a vital part of aesthetic evaluation, these five components were presented both by words and images in the survey. (See Figure 3-1) Next, participants described their future behavioral intentions of game attendance, merchandise purchases, and media consumption related to the Houston Cougars football team. For future consumption behavioral intentions, three question items were “I plan to attend one or more Houston Cougar football games” (game attendance), “I am likely to purchase Houston Cougars football team-related apparel” (merchandise purchases), and “I am likely to watch Houston Cougars football game on TV” (media consumption). The seven-point Likert scale was used in these surveys, with 1 meaning strongly disagree, 4 meaning neutral, and 7 meaning strongly agree, participants rated how much they agree/disagree with the statements. In the end, participants provided demographic information such as gender, age, and race, and then indicated how long they have lived in the Houston area.

In order to minimize participant errors, five question items for each team symbolism components were randomly replaced with items of reverse meaning. For example, one item of logo-related question, “I appreciate the beauty inherent in the Houston Cougars logo,” was rephrased as “I DO NOT appreciate the beauty inherent in the Houston Cougars logo.” Meanwhile, some question items were rephrased in different

wording, and the order of questions was random. In this way, participants needed to read each question carefully before they responded to each of them.

### **Participants**

This study used a convenience sampling method, utilizing a student sample consisting of participants from several large undergraduate classes at a major university located in the south United States. At least 3,000 students on the rosters were contacted via e-mail and offered bonus points as an incentive to take part in the study at the instructors' discretion. The message included instructions and a link to SurveyMonkey, a known online survey website, which provided a questionnaire along with a consent form. Participants in this survey had to be 18 years of age or older to participate. In terms of sample size, Kline (2010) and Hair et al. (2009) recommended at least 10 respondents per each question item. Stemming from the recommendations, because there were 27 question items in this questionnaire, and three-split sub-sample was for 270 each, the targeted numbers of questionnaires used for subsequent data analyses was 810.

Using a student sample in this study is an appropriate selection. As discussed previously, this study represents the first attempt to explore the influence of perceived aesthetic quality of team symbolism on future sport consumption behavioral intentions, and as such is exploratory in nature. The local collegiate sport team and its main components of team symbolism were used as stimuli. When the community connection is one of the most significant points of attachment with teams (Cottingham, Chatfield, Gearity, Allen, & Hall, 2012), recruiting survey participants from undergraduate students from a university in the same area is beneficial.

### **Procedures**

Following the development of instruments, the preliminary questionnaire was submitted to a panel of experts for face and content validity. The panel of experts included four university professors: three specialize in sport marketing and measurement, and the other specializes in socio-cultural and historical aspects of sport. Each panel member examined the relevance, representativeness, clarity, test formant, and item content of questionnaire and its associated sections. Based on feedback from the panel, the preliminary questionnaire was modified, revised, and improved. The format of the questionnaire was designed to decrease respondent fatigue and make each item concise and easy to comprehend. An Informed Consent form explaining the purpose of the study and requesting cooperation from the participant was also developed. Approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Participants was obtained prior to data collection. After the questionnaire was modified and approved, a pilot study was conducted on a student sample of current or potential sport consumers. The purpose of the pilot study was to further examine the content validity from the perspective of the targeted population and to examine the reliability of the developed scales in terms of Cronbach's alpha. Reliability results for the pilot study were reported in table 3-1. Results indicated high internal consistency among the factors ( $\alpha = .802 - .900$ ), therefore all items were retained for the main study.

### **Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistics for the demographic, perceived aesthetic quality of team symbolism, and future sport consumption behavioral intentions variables were calculated with SPSS 22. Later, structural equation modeling (SEM) analyses including

investigation of measurement model and structural model were performed with Analysis of Moment Structure (AMOS) 22.

The measurement model and structural model were analyzed separately because this two-step procedure made it possible to examine construct validity and reliability (Hair et al., 2009). After data collection, the sample was randomly divided into three using SPSS. Using three different sub-samples for each analysis was to avoid the concern that further respecifications on the same sample would increase Type I error. The first set of data was used to conduct a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) in order to validate the scale. The result of the measurement model showed how well the indicators capture their specified constructs and how the model should be respecified according to the factor loading values and goodness-of-fit indices. The second set of the data was then used to conduct a CFA to this respecified model in order to verify the model fit to the data well. Finally, the third data set was used to conduct a structural equation modeling (SEM) to examine the hypothesized relationship between the perceived aesthetic quality of team symbolism and future sport consumption behavioral intentions variables.

In the first step, measurement model fit was evaluated by examining the ratio of the chi-square to its degrees of freedom ( $\chi^2/df$ ), the root-mean-square-error (RMSEA), the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), the comparative fit index (CFI), goodness-of-fit index (GFI), and non-normal fit index (NNFI).

The chi-square per degree of freedom values should range less than 3.0 (Kline, 2010). The RMSEA is only equal to zero when there is a perfect fit, but the other values were also used to determine the fit of the model in this study: less than .060 indicates a good fitting model; .061-.080 indicates a reasonable fit; .081-.100 indicates a poor fit, and

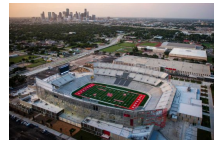
greater than .100 is unacceptable (Hu & Bentler, 1999). A cutoff value is close to .08 for SRMR (Hu & Bentler, 1999). GFI should be greater than .90 (Bryne, 1994). As the CFI and NNFI, Hu and Bentler (1999) indicated a conservative threshold of .95 or greater.

In order to establish validity of the measures, discriminant validity was examined and assessed by squaring the correlations of the referent factors. At the initial level, the correlations between the factors should not be higher than .85 (Kline, 2010). At the stringent level, the factors were regarded not distinct if the results were greater than the average variance extracted (AVE) score of either or any other factors (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

In order to establish construct reliability, AVE scores were calculated and should not be greater than .50, and factor loadings should be equal to or greater than .707 (Hair et al., 2009). Internal consistency was also examined for the factors, with the alpha coefficients equal to or greater than .707 being deemed acceptable (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

In the second step, the proposed structural model was tested to examine the hypothesized relationship among perceived aesthetic quality of team symbolism and future sport consumption behavioral intentions (Figure 2-2). The chi-square per degree of freedom, RMSEA, SRMR, CFI, GFI and NNFI values were used to indicate the fit of the model to the data, and the same fit index criteria in the measurement model were utilized. Path coefficients were used to determine the direct relationship between team symbolism and behavioral intentions factors (Kline, 2010).





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Logo

Color

Uniform

Mascot

Sport venue

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**Figure 3-1.** Five images of Team Symbolism

**Table 3-1.** Internal consistency for perceived aesthetic quality and future sport consumption behavioral intentions from pilot study ( $n = 50$ )

Factor	Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ )
<i>Perceived Aesthetic Quality</i>	
Color	.874
Logo	.858
Mascot	.900
Uniform	.802
Venue	.898
<i>Future Sport Consumption Behavioral Intentions</i>	.849

## **Chapter Four**

### **Results**

The results of this study are presented in the following three sections: (1) descriptive statistics, (2) measurement model, and (3) structural model.

#### **Descriptive Statistics**

##### **Description of the Sample**

The participants were recruited to participate in the online survey for this study from April 20 to May 1, 2015. A total of 1,146 logins were made to the online survey, but 224 were invalid attempts, including no responses, incomplete with missing values, and double responses. Consequently, a total of 922 valid responses were recorded through the online data collection procedure and used for subsequent data analyses.

Descriptive statistics for personal background and demographics variables are presented in Table 4-1. Of the sample ( $N = 922$ ), 56.7% were female and 43.3% were male. More than half of the respondents (51.8%) were between 18 and 20-year-old, and nearly 88% were between 18 and 24 ( $M = 21.36$ ;  $SD = 4.20$ ). A majority of respondents were Asian (36.8%), while the rest of the respondents were Caucasian (23.8%), Hispanic (23.6%), African American (10.4%), and Other (4.2%). Most of them have lived in the Houston area for more than 10 years (61.4%), while only 18.8% have lived in the community less than 3 years.

##### **Perceive Aesthetic Quality Variables (PAQ)**

Descriptive statistics including mean and standard deviation for the perceived aesthetic quality variables are presented in Table 4-2. All 20 items had a mean score

above 4.0 midpoint on the 7-point Likert scale, indicating that respondents did perceive much aesthetic quality with viewing these five team symbolism components of a collegiate football team. The average mean score of all 20 perceived aesthetic items was 5.66 ( $SD = 1.43$ ). Of the perceived aesthetic variables, the “The design of the Houston Cougars stadium is of a good quality” item had the highest mean score ( $M = 5.95$ ;  $SD = 1.33$ ), and the “Seeing the Houston Cougars uniform pleases me” item had the lowest mean score ( $M = 5.19$ ;  $SD = 1.46$ ). Of the perceived aesthetic quality dimensions, the highest average mean score was Venue ( $M = 5.90$ ;  $SD = 1.30$ ), followed by Color ( $M = 5.78$ ;  $SD = 1.38$ ). The lowest average mean score was Uniform ( $M = 5.32$ ;  $SD = 1.52$ ), followed by Mascot ( $M = 5.59$ ;  $SD = 1.53$ ).

For measuring data normality, skewness and kurtosis values for the perceived aesthetic quality items were examined. Chou and Bentler (1995) suggested that an absolute value exceeding 3.0 for skewness and kurtosis would be considered extreme. All skewness and kurtosis values were within the acceptable range (Table 4-2).

### **Future Sport Consumption Behavioral Intentions (FSCBI)**

Descriptive statistics including mean and standard deviation for the future sport consumption behavior intentions variables are presented in Table 4-3. All 3 items had a mean score above 4.0 midpoint on the 7-point Likert scale, indicating that the future intentions toward sport consumption of this collegiate football team was highly positive. The average mean score of all 3 future sport consumption behavioral intentions items was 4.80 ( $SD = 1.81$ ). Of the future sport consumption behavioral intentions variables, the “I plan to attend one or more Houston Cougars football games” item had the highest mean score ( $M = 5.39$ ;  $SD = 1.67$ ), and the “I am likely to watch Houston Cougars football

game on TV” item had the lowest mean score ( $M = 4.44$ ;  $SD = 1.92$ ). All skewness and kurtosis values were well within the acceptable range (Table 4-3).

### **Measurement Model**

The first random of the data set ( $n = 307$ ) for the perceived aesthetic quality and future sport consumption behavioral intentions variables, containing 23 items under six factors, was submitted to a CFA. Goodness of fit indexes revealed that the six-factor, 23-item measurement model did not fit the data well (Table 4-4). More specifically, the chi-square statistics was significant ( $\chi^2 = 605.98$ ,  $p < .001$ ), indicating there was a statistically significant difference between the hypothesized model and the observed model. The chi-square statistic, although useful, is known to be sensitive to sample size. According to Kline (2010), if a sample is large enough, the chi-square value can lead to model rejection even in the midst of slight differences between observed and predicted covariances. Therefore, other goodness-of-fit indices were examined, including the normed chi-square, RMSEA, SRMR, CFI, GFI, and NNFI. Researchers have suggested the use of the normed chi-square ( $\chi^2/df$ ) in order to reduce the sensitivity of the chi-square statistic to sample size. The normed chi-square value ( $\chi^2/df = 2.81$ ) ranged less than 3.0 (Kline, 2010). The RMSEA value (.077) indicated that the six-factor model showed a reasonable fit. The SRMR value (.047) was within the range of acceptable fit ( $< .08$ ; Hu & Bentler, 1999). The CFI value (.92) and NNFI value (.91) were both below the cut-off ( $> .95$ ) recommended by Hu & Bentler (1999). The GFI value (.84) was also less than recommended threshold ( $> .90$ ; Bryne, 1994). In totality, the model fit tests suggested the need for a respecification of the model.

A conservative criterion specifying that factor loadings should be equal to or greater than .707 (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988) was chosen for the scale in order to demonstrate good convergent validity. In the six-factor, 23-item model, five items were below the .707 threshold, failing to meet the pre-determined criterion. These five items were subsequently removed, one item from Factor 1 (Color: CO2 – I appreciate the beauty of the Houston Cougars color scheme), one item from Factor 2 (Logo: LG1 – I appreciate the design of the Houston Cougars logo), one item from Factor 3 (Mascot: MC4 – I DO NOT enjoy seeing the Houston Cougars mascot), one item from Factor 4 (Uniform: UN3 – I DO NOT enjoy the gracefulness associated with the Houston Cougars uniform), and one item from Factor 5 (Venue: VU1 – The design of the Houston Cougars stadium is of a good quality) .

Respecification of the model generated a six-factor model with 18 items: Logo (3 items), Color (3 items), Mascot (3 items), Uniform (3 items), Venue (3 items), and FSCBI (3 items). As previously specified, each factor consists of at least three items (Bollen, 1989). In order to prevent increasing Type I error, the respecified six-factor, 18-item model was submitted to a CFA again by using the second random split of data set ( $n = 307$ ). Overall goodness of fit indicated that the respecified model fit the data reasonably well and was much better than the original six-factor, 23-item model (Table 4-4). The chi-square statistic was significant ( $\chi^2 = 228.11, p < .001$ ). The normed chi-square ( $\chi^2/df = 1.90$ ) was closer to the recommended 3.0 value by Bollen (1989). The RMSEA value (.054) indicated a good fitting model ( $< .060$ ; Hu & Bentler, 1999). The SRMR value (.038) was less than the .08 recommended by Hu and Bentler (1999). The CFI value (.97) and NNFI value (.97) was greater than recommended threshold ( $> .95$ ). The GFI value

was .93, above the cut-off ( $> .90$ ) recommended by Bryne (1994). Overall model fit of the six-factor respecified model with 18 items was significantly better than the original model. After performing chi-square different test, the result was statistically significant, which showed these two models were significantly different from each other.

The reliability of the perceived aesthetic quality and future sport consumption behavioral intentions factors was evaluated through the use of Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) and AVE values (Table 4-5). The Cronbach's alpha values for all of the perceived aesthetic quality and future sport consumption behavioral intentions factors were above the recommended .70 threshold (Hair et al., 2009), ranging from .823 (FSCBI) to .892 (Mascot). AVE values for the perceived aesthetic quality and future sport consumption behavioral intentions factors were all above the recommended .50 threshold (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988), ranging from .613 (Uniform) to .705 (Mascot). All factor loadings exceeded .707 after eliminating five aforementioned items (See Table 4-5). Based upon these evaluations, the subscales showed good construct reliability. Discriminant validity was established when the estimated correlations between the factors were not excessively high ( $> .85$ ; Kline, 2010). Interfactor correlations ranged from .408 (Color – Venue) to .691 (Color – Logo), all sufficiently below the recommended .85 threshold, indicating reasonable discriminant validity (Table 4-6). Overall, this measurement model showed good validity and reliability. Thus, the six-factor model was used for a subsequent SEM analysis by using third randomly split data set ( $n = 308$ ).

### **Structural Model**

The third random part of the data ( $n = 308$ ) was submitted to an SEM test using AMOS 22 in order to test the hypotheses of this study. Following two-step modeling,

goodness of fit indices was examined for the proposed SEM Model (Table 4-9). The current SEM indicated a marginal fit ( $\chi^2 = 370.94$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 2.88$ , RMSEA = .078, SRMR = .055, CFI = .94, GFI = .88, NNFI = .93).

The CFI value (.94) was slightly lower than the designated cut-off (.95) probably due to the complexity of the model (Cheung & Rensvold, 2002). The path coefficients for the model are shown in Figure 4-3. Perceived aesthetic quality (PAQ) had a positive influence on future sport consumption behavioral intentions (FSCBI, standardized beta coefficient = .63) indicating PAQ was an important predictor of sport consumer behavior. Thus, the result confirmed the hypothesis. Overall, the structural model fit the data marginally well and showed positive relationships between the two variables. Five team symbolism factors were found to be important factors of PAQ. Figure 4-3 depicted the fit, with loadings range from .58 (Venue) to .85 (Logo).



**Table 4-1.** Frequency distributions for demographic variables (*N* = 922)

Variable	Category	Frequency (%)	Cumulative %
Gender	Male	399 (43.3)	43.3
	Female	523 (56.7)	100.0
Age	18-20	478 (51.8)	51.8
	21-23	293 (31.8)	83.6
	24-26	76 (8.3)	91.9
	> 26	75(8.1)	100.0
Area Year	< 1 year	69 (7.5)	7.5
	1 to 3	104 (11.3)	18.8
	3 to 5	78 (8.5)	27.2
	5 to 10	105 (11.4)	38.6
	> 10	566 (61.4)	100.0
Ethnicity	American Indian	4 (4)	4
	Asian	339 (36.8)	37.2
	African American	96 (10.4)	47.6
	Hispanic	218 (23.6)	71.3
	Pacific Islander	7 (8)	72.0
	White	219 (23.8)	95.8
	Other	39 (4.2)	100.0

**Table 4-2.** Descriptive statistics for Perceived Aesthetic Quality variables ( $N = 922$ )

	Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Skewness	Kurtosis
1	I DO NOT appreciate the design of the Houston Cougars color scheme. (CO1)	5.83	1.40	-1.49	1.86
2	I enjoy the gracefulness associated with the Houston Cougars color scheme. (CO2)	5.71	1.38	-1.31	1.47
3	I appreciate the beauty inherent in the Houston Cougars color scheme. (CO3)	5.77	1.47	-1.58	2.28
4	I enjoy seeing the Houston Cougars color scheme. (CO4)	5.85	1.28	-1.45	2.05
	COLOR	5.79	1.38		
5	I appreciate the design of the Houston Cougars logo. (LG1)	5.60	1.52	-1.43	1.62
6	I DO NOT appreciate the beauty inherent in the Houston Cougars logo. (LG2)	5.75	1.43	-1.38	1.37
7	I enjoy the gracefulness associated with the Houston Cougars logo. (LG3)	5.58	1.41	-1.06	0.62
8	I enjoy seeing the Houston Cougars logo. (LG4)	5.74	1.33	-1.30	1.54
	LOGO	5.67	1.42		
9	I appreciate the design of the Houston Cougars mascot. (MC1)	5.56	1.52	-1.20	0.87
10	The Houston Cougars mascot looks good to me. (MC2)	5.49	1.54	-1.13	0.52
11	I enjoy the gracefulness associated with the Houston Cougars mascot. (MC3)	5.48	1.48	-1.04	0.52
12	I DO NOT enjoy seeing the Houston Cougars mascot. (MC4)	5.84	1.60	-1.55	1.60
	MASCOT	5.59	1.54		
13	The design of the Houston Cougars uniform is of a good quality. (UN1)	5.41	1.46	-0.96	0.31
14	The Houston Cougars uniform looks good to me. (UN2)	5.45	1.49	-1.04	0.38
15	I DO NOT enjoy the gracefulness associated with the Houston Cougars uniform. (UN3)	5.26	1.68	-0.84	-0.29
16	Seeing the Houston Cougars uniform pleases me. (UN4)	5.20	1.47	-0.69	-0.08
	UNIFORM	5.33	1.52		
17	The design of the Houston Cougars stadium is of a good quality. (VU1)	5.95	1.34	-1.69	2.80
18	I think the Houston Cougars stadium is beautiful. (VU2)	5.87	1.31	-1.49	2.25
19	I DO NOT enjoy the gracefulness associated with the Houston Cougars stadium. (VU3)	5.94	1.29	-1.68	2.90
20	Seeing the Houston Cougars stadium pleases me. (VU4)	5.84	1.31	-1.36	1.63
	VENUE	5.90	1.31		
	PAQ	5.66	1.43		

**Table 4-3.** Descriptive statistics for Future Sport Consumption Behavioral Intentions variables ( $N = 922$ )

	Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Skewness	Kurtosis
1	I plan to attend one or more Houston Cougars football games. (ATT)	5.40	1.67	-1.11	0.42
2	I am likely to watch Houston Cougars football game on TV. (MDA)	4.45	1.92	-0.33	-1.05
3	I am likely to purchase Houston Cougars football team-related apparels. (MER)	4.58	1.84	-0.44	-0.86
	FSCBI	4.81	1.81		

**Table 4-4.** Model fit for each model

Method	$\chi^2$	$df$	$\chi^2/df$	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	GFI	NNFI
CFA 6-factor model (23 items)	605.98	215	2.81	.077	.047	.92	.84	.91
CFA 6-factor model (18 items)	228.11	120	1.90	.054	.038	.97	.93	.97
SEM	370.94	129	2.88	.078	.055	.94	.88	.93

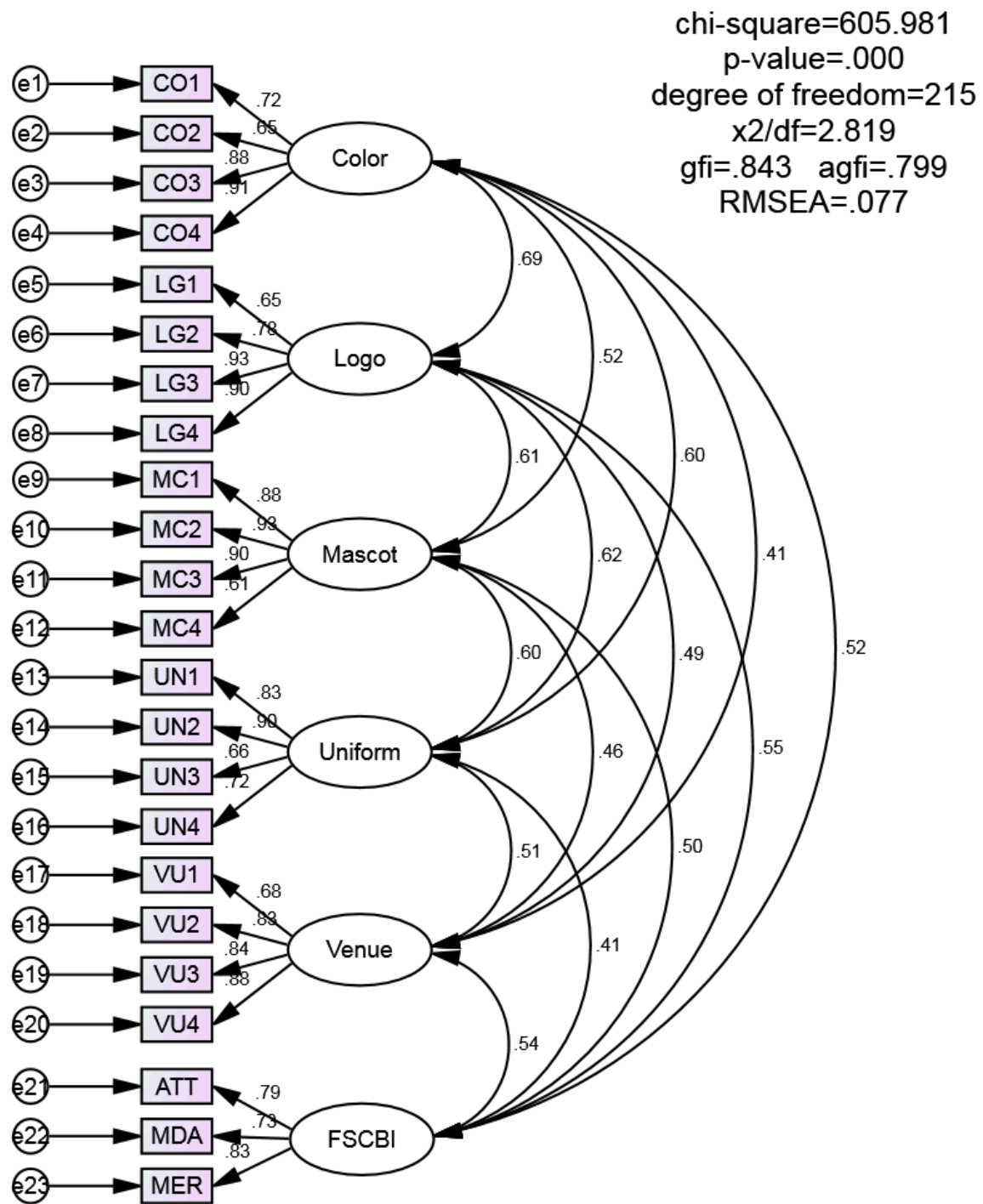
Note. Fit indices are suggested to meet the following criteria for good fit:  $\chi^2/df < 3.0$  (Kline, 2010), RMSEA < .06 (Hu & Bentler, 1999), SRMR < .08 (Hu & Bentler, 1999), CFI > .95 (Hu & Bentler, 1999), GFI > .90 (Bryne, 1994), NNFI > .95 (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

**Table 4-5.** Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ), and average variance extracted (AVE) using first split of data ( $n = 307$ )

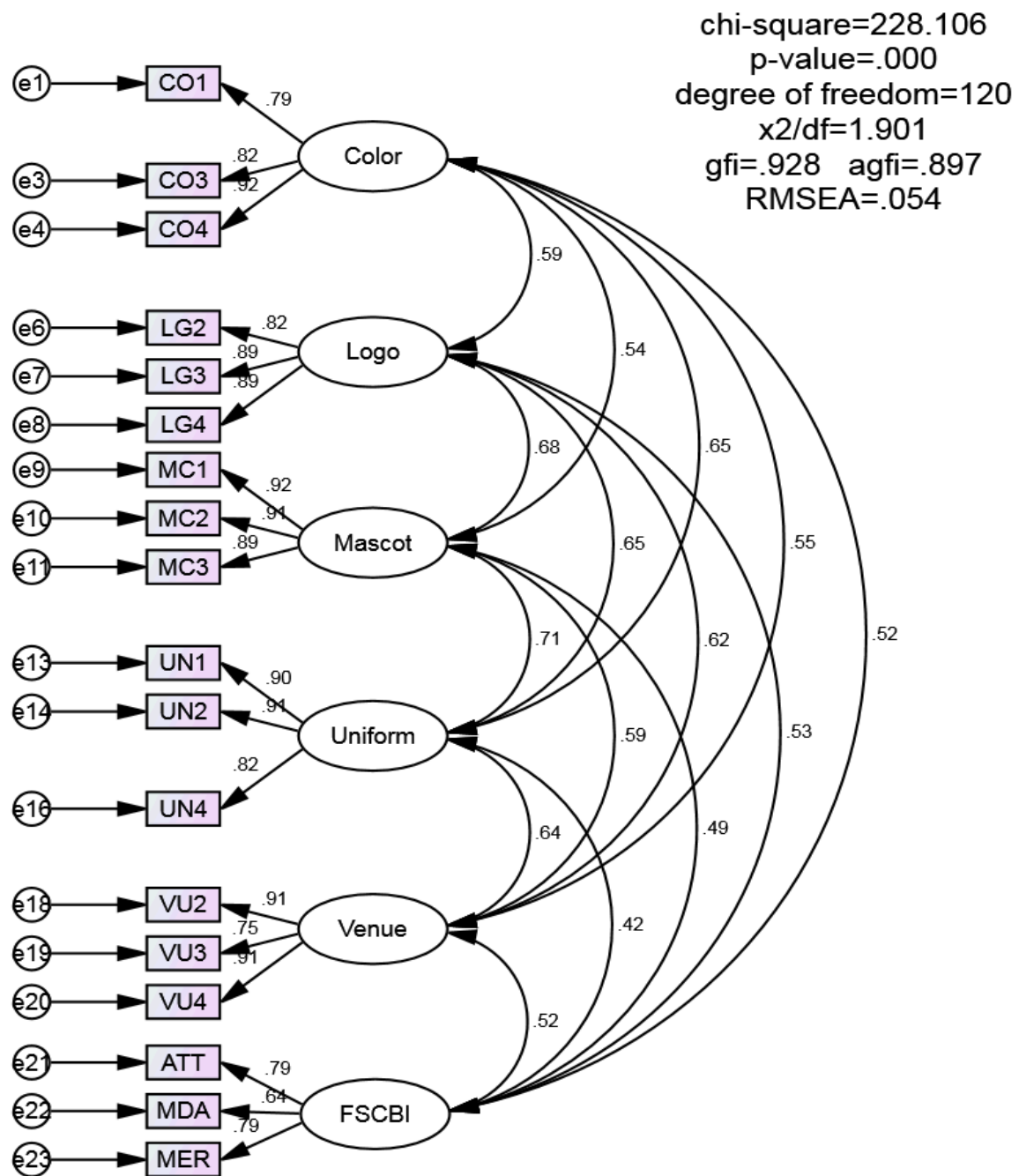
Factor	$\alpha$	AVE
<i>Perceived Aesthetic Quality</i>		
Color	.860	.635
Logo	.884	.676
Mascot	.892	.705
Uniform	.853	.618
Venue	.883	.657
<i>Future Sport Consumption Behavioral Intentions</i>	.823	.615

**Table 4-6.** Correlation for the measurement model

	Color	Logo	Mascot	Uniform	Venue	FSCBI
Color	1					
Logo	.69	1				
Mascot	.52	.61	1			
Uniform	.60	.62	.60	1		
Venue	.41	.49	.46	.51	1	
FSCBI	.52	.55	.50	.41	.54	1

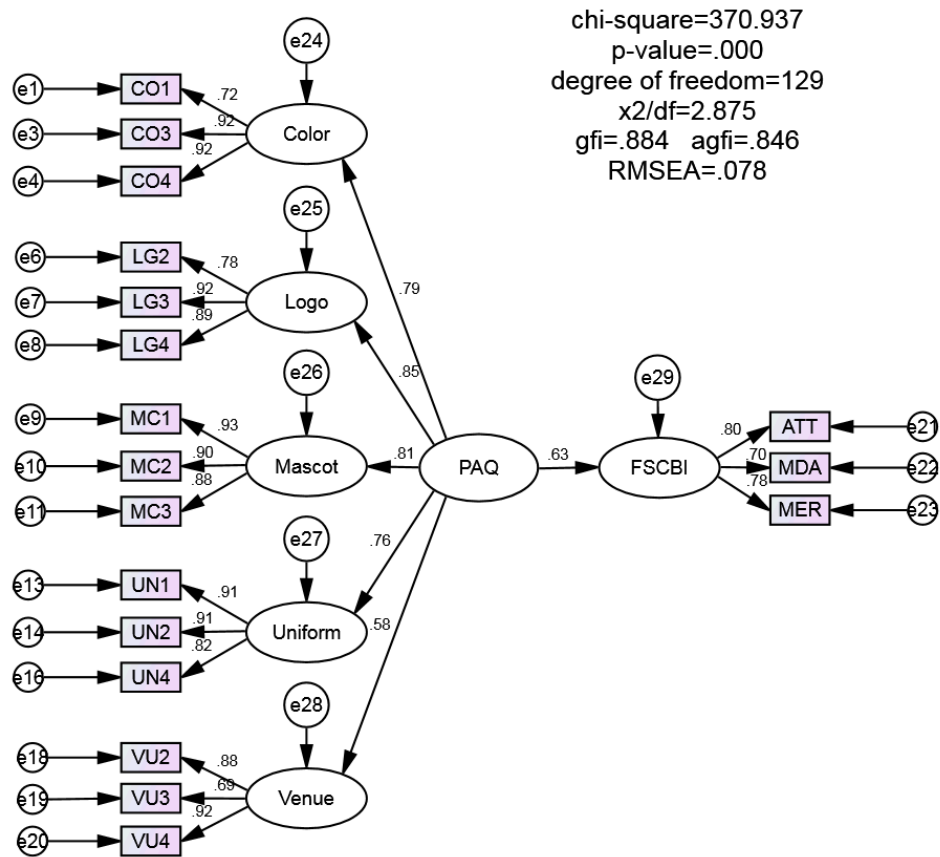


**Figure 4-1.** Confirmatory factory analysis



**Figure 4-2.** Respecified measurement model





**Figure 4-3.** TS, PAQ, FSCBI model

## **Chapter Five**

### **Discussion**

Team symbolism is a popular phenomenon that has drawn interest from sport management researchers, especially in the sport marketing area. These tangible visual icons, including color, logo, uniform, mascot, and sport venue, serve as a standard marketing tool set for diverse sport teams. But, to date, they have not been fully investigated as components of team appearance. Thus, the purpose of this study was to develop and empirically test a theoretical model that explains how team appearance works in consumers' mind.

The model consisted of five first-order latent constructs of team symbolism that represented a second-order variable, PAQ, and one latent construct, FSCBI, of future sport consumption behavioral intentions of a sport team was proposed and tested in order to answer two research questions: (1) By structural equation modeling (SEM), does the perceived aesthetic quality of these team symbolism factors have a statistically significant influence on sports consumer's future consumption behavioral intentions? (2) By adopting the variables of TS and PAQ, is it reasonable to expand the traditional definition of aesthetic in sports and supplement the comprehensiveness of sport consumption motivation? The results revealed positive answers to both questions.

The CFA results indicated good fit to the data. The two reliability assessments (i.e., Cronbach's alphas and AVE values) collectively demonstrated that all constructs in the measurement model were internally consistent. The highest factor correlation

was .691 (Color-Logo), the lowest AVE value was .613 (Uniform), supporting discriminant validity (Kline, 2010).

The overall results of the SEM indicated that the structural model fit the data marginally well. The five first-order latent constructs, color, logo, uniform, mascot, and venue (i.e., team symbolism, TS), were all significantly associated with the second-order latent construct, perceived aesthetic quality (PAQ), explaining up to 85% of the variance. PAQ was significantly associated with the future sport consumption behavioral intentions (FSCBI) of the team, explaining 63% of the variance.

Generally, the findings in the current study were consistent with the literature and provided further evidence to expand the fund of knowledge in the field of sport management. For example, in this study, the team appearance influenced sport consumers' future consumption behavioral intentions. This finding is consistent with earlier studies addressing consumer behaviors that suggested the appearance of a product affect on consumers' product choices (Creusen & Schoormans, 2005). More specifically, the spectators' perceived aesthetic quality of logo, color, uniform, mascot, and venue explain a significant of variance in behavioral intentions of attendance, merchandise, and media consumption. The result was also consistent with previous research in sport management on how the design of a team logo can influence the purchase intention of team-logoed merchandise (Ahn, Suh, Lee, & Pedersen, 2012), and the way aesthetics or beauty of the stadium was positively related to game attendance (Wakefield & Sloan, 1995). With these findings, it is reasonable to infer that the team appearance affects its consumers' evaluation and consumption intentions by the perceived aesthetic quality of its team symbolism.

The finding also further confirmed the FSCBI as a construct to evaluate effectiveness of sport marketing. While most researchers within sport management measuring behavioral intentions have done so by focusing on one consumption behavior such as attendance (Tsuji, Bennett, & Dees, 2008), the current research combined three diverse consumption behaviors (i.e., attendance, merchandise and media consumption) into one dimension. James and Trail (2008) suggested that purchasing merchandise and following a team through media outlets are both important, and distinct from game attendance intentions. This is consistent with the finding of this study. Moreover, the other variables that influenced FSCBI had been clearly identified. Behavioral intentions have been used as one of the common outcome variables in marketing and consumer behavior research (Zeithaml, Bitner, & Gremler, 2006). These behavioral intentions have been found to be a direct consequence of such variables as customer satisfaction (Eggert & Ulaga, 2002), perceived value (Petrick & Backman, 2002), and store image (Grewal, Monroe, & Krishnan, 1998). In sport management research, Wakefield and Blodgett (1996) found that future sport consumption behavioral intentions were directly influenced by spectators' satisfaction. In comparison with Wakefield and Blodgett (1996), the finding of the current study extended the idea that spectators' satisfaction can be influenced by the perceived aesthetic quality of the team appearance as well.

The finding also indicated a possible mechanism in sport consumer decision-making process beyond motives. Although motives are a critical component of the model of sport spectator consumption behavior and explain a significant amount of variance in attendance behavior (Nakazawa, Mahony, Funk, & Hirakawa, 1999), a great deal of variance in attendance remains unexplained by motives. The unexplained variance might

come from the other motivating factors of aesthetics. The entertainment theories suggested sports are attractive because of the pleasure and satisfaction that spectators receive from watching (Zillmann & Paulus, 1993), and implied the aesthetic appreciation established sport as an art form (Sloan, 1989). Therefore, sport consumers are attracted by sport teams due to their value of aesthetics. The traditional definition of aesthetics was described as the mastery exhibited by athletes and teams during competition, and the beauty of the competitive game draws people to watch sports (Wann, 1995). Since aesthetics is a set of principles concerned with the nature and appreciation of beauty (Merriam-Webster, 2015), and the sport team appearance can be an aesthetic object, the aesthetics motive should be extended to other more tangible and controllable aesthetic visual elements, such as team symbolism factors. With the finding of this study, the evaluation result of aesthetic appearance of sport teams can impact the potential customers' future sport consumption behavioral intentions, the definition of aesthetics can be expanded in the future study regarding sport marketing.

The interpretation of the aforementioned results implies that it is reasonable to expand the traditional definition of aesthetic in sports and supplement the comprehensiveness of sport consumption motivation. By adopting the variables of TS and PAQ, the sport team appearance can be deemed as an aesthetic object, and the aesthetics motive should be extended to other more tangible and controllable aesthetic visual elements. This finding is generally consistent with the literature, which suggested the amount of aesthetics consumers perceive could affect their consumption behavior (Veryzer, 1993).

### **Practical implications**

The findings of this study can be beneficial for both sport marketing scholars and sport industry practitioners by providing a better understanding of how team appearance with different level of perceived aesthetic quality impacts the consumption intentions. Research findings from this study filled a void in the sport management literature by first developing a comprehensive conceptual framework and multi-dimensional sport spectator-specific measurement scale for TS and then built a link to behavioral intentions regarding future sport consumption behaviors. The appearance of a sport team, which was represented by TS in this study, was proved really impactful on sport consumers' behavioral intentions. The results also extended the traditional definition of aesthetic motivation by applying the proposed construct of PAQ.

Considering the complicated decision-making process of the consumer, TS and PAQ can provide alternative perspectives of sport marketing that can be applied to increase the effectiveness of practical promotion and academic discussion. Color, logo, uniform, mascot, and venue are five factors commonly used in modern sport team branding and promotion, and sport marketers used to lack the capacity to understand how well their investment in branding works in sport consumers' mind. Now the PAQ represents an instrument accessible to practitioners that can help to predict the strength of their potential sport consumers' patronage intentions. By conducting a survey of estimating how well spectators perceived sport teams' aesthetic appearance, sport marketers will be able to know which TS components might perform poorly and then allocate resources toward enhancing PAQ of a sport team in order to increase potential revenue.

In addition, within today's highly competitive sports market place, many teams are subject to redesign their color schemes, logos, and other TS components as one of the marketing tactics due to relocation or rebranding (Kelly, Hoffman, & Carter, 1999). One implication of this study is that sport marketers need to be careful when thinking about changing their TS components. They may assume that a new logo and jersey could always increase potential merchandise sales. However, for example, the NBA innovated sleeve-jerseys are not selling well and consumers complained about them (Dwyer, 2014), which is a contemporary example illustrating that the appearance of uniforms influences the sport consumer purchase behavioral intention (Thomas, 2015). Before such a drastic change of TS components is made, the scale and framework proposed in this study can be applied by practitioners to determine whether original branding components or redesigned team symbolism components are more effective at attracting new fans and encouraging current fans to invest more.

Furthermore, for those sport teams struggling to improve their poor sales performance on tickets and merchandises, it could be particularly useful for acknowledging a low PAQ of TS as a constraint to attendance and consumption. Some customers tend to weigh negative information more heavily than positive information (Creusen & Schoormans, 2005), therefore, the lack of aesthetic quality, resulting from individuals' perceptions of ugliness when assessing attributes of TS, might bring strong and negative influences on marketing outcomes. A better understanding of low PAQ of TS and its effect on behavioral intentions is beneficial to sport managers and marketers.

### **Limitations and Future Research Suggestions**

This study was limited by a number of factors, and several future research suggestions were made consequently. First, the study involved a convenience student sample, thus research findings may not be generalized to all sport consumers. Thus, future studies may need to use a sample from the general population and increase diversity of sample composition and sample size.

Secondly, the self-reported questionnaire might not fully reflect the respondents' aesthetic perception and limited the generalizability. Over the past years and under diverse terms, such as consumer neuroscience and neuromarketing, the field of consumer research has applied an interdisciplinary brain scanning method – functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI) into its practice (Stoll, Baecke, & Kenning, 2008). It should be served a more precise tool for future sport consumer research that attempts to further identify how PAQ influences sport consumers' decision-making procedures in their brain and mind.

Thirdly, two of the potential TS components, cheerleader and marching band, were excluded from the present model due to insufficient literature support. However, in the context of North American team sports, especially basketball and American football, team mascots are usually accompanied by cheerleaders and marching bands while they are interacting together with spectators during time-outs or half time show activities. Cheerleader is an American icon that is numbering 3.8 millions in the United States alone, and cheerleaders are part of all school and sport experiences (Adams & Betties, 2003). There are several famous cheerleading squads that have been deemed significant components of a sport team's image, such as the recognizable Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders and the Laker Girls. The uniforms cheerleaders wear have the same logo



and color scheme as players'. Similar to cheerleaders, the marching band is a key element in the pageantry of college football in America. The marching band plays a team's fight song, leads cheers and performs the halftime show, which is an important part of collegiate football tradition (Toma, 2003). The correlation among cheerleaders, marching bands, and other TS components required further empirical research to clarify.

Lastly, some other possible moderators might exist in this model, such as gender, age, and consumption preferences, but were not tested in this study. While several researchers have found that men are more motivated by aesthetics (James & Ridinger, 2002; Wann, 1995; Wann, Schrader, & Wilson, 1999), the relatively young potential consumers might also be influenced by sport team appearance more so than the older generations. These hypotheses regarding demographic differences require further exploration. The last possible moderator is potential customers' consumption preference. For example, consumers who generally consider the appearance and attractiveness more than other features, such as functionality, costs, and manufactures when choosing among products, might be more likely to be influenced by the sport team appearance. If they prefer purchasing something beautiful, they might be motivated to consume merchandise from a sport team with a better appearance. Taking these variables into consideration may bring a more comprehensive elaboration of future research relating perceived aesthetic quality, team symbolic factors, and team appearance.

## Appendix

No	Statement	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Somewhat Disagree	4 Neutral	5 Somewhat Agree	6 Agree	7 Strongly Agree
<i>Team Symbolism</i>								
Logo								
1	I appreciate the design of the Houston Cougars logo.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2	I appreciate the beauty inherent in the Houston Cougars logo.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3	I enjoy the gracefulness associated with the Houston Cougars logo.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4	I enjoy seeing the Houston Cougars logo.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Color								
5	I appreciate the design of the Houston Cougars color scheme.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6	I appreciate the beauty inherent in the Houston Cougars color scheme.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7	I enjoy the gracefulness associated with the Houston Cougars color scheme.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8	I enjoy seeing the Houston Cougars color scheme.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Uniform								
9	I appreciate the design of the Houston Cougars uniform.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10	I appreciate the beauty inherent in the Houston Cougars uniform.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11	I enjoy the gracefulness associated with the Houston Cougars uniform.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12	I enjoy seeing the Houston Cougars uniform.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mascot								
13	I appreciate the design of the Houston Cougars mascot.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14	I appreciate the beauty inherent in the Houston Cougars mascot.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15	I enjoy the gracefulness associated with the Houston Cougars mascot.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16	I enjoy seeing the Houston Cougars mascot.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Stadium								

17	I appreciate the design of the Houston Cougars stadium.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18	I appreciate the beauty inherent in the Houston Cougars stadium.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19	I enjoy the gracefulness associated with the Houston Cougars stadium.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20	I enjoy seeing the Houston Cougars stadium.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Consumption Behavioral Intentions</i>								
21	I plan to attend one or more Houston Cougars football games.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22	I am likely to purchase Houston Cougars football team-related apparel.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23	I am likely to watch Houston Cougars football game on TV.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24	I consider myself a Houston Cougars fan.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Consumption behavior</i>								
25	When choosing among products, I generally consider their appearance and attractiveness more than other features (such as functionality, costs, manufacturers, etc.).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26	I prefer purchasing something beautiful.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27	I personally had a strong aesthetic reaction to creative artifact (i.e., a feeling of the beauty of a work of art, piece of music, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Sport Consumption behavior</i>								
28	I am likely to attend sports events more frequently.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
29	I am likely to purchase sport team merchandise more frequently.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
30	I am likely to watch sports event on TV more frequently.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Demographic</i>								
31	Gender	Female	Male					
32	Age							
33	Race	White	African American	Latino	Native American	Asian	Pacific Islander	Other
34	How long have you lived in the Houston area?	<1 year	1 to 3 years	3 to 5 years	5-10 years	>10 years		

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